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REMARKS

Applicant cancels claim 22. Claims 1-21 remain pending in the application. Applicant amends claim 9 for a minor correction, and amends claims 1, 8, and 15 for clarification.

Applicant refers to Figs. 16-17 and 21-23, and their corresponding description in the specification for exemplary embodiments of and support for the claimed invention. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner objected to the title of the invention for allegedly being not descriptive. Applicant amends the title to clearly read "PACKET RELAYING APPARATUS AND RELAYING METHOD WITH NEXT RELAYING ADDRESS COLLATION," and respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the Examiner's allowance of claims 9-14 and the finding that claims 4-5, 7, 18-19, and 21 contain allowable subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that base claims 1 and 15 are patentable over the reference cited against them as demonstrated below. Accordingly, Applicants request that the Examiner also allow claims 4-5, 7, 18-19, and 21 dependent from claims 1 and 15, respectively.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,751,220 to Li. Applicant cancels the rejected claim.

Claims 1, 3, 6, 8, 15, 17, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,079,020 to Liu; and claims 2 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu in view of Li. Applicant amends claims 1, 8, and 15 in a good faith effort to clarify the invention as distinguished from the cited references, and respectfully traverse the rejections.

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The Examiner relied upon the description of a client object 630 in Liu, which indicates a listing of VPNs that the corresponding client belongs to, as alleged disclosure of the claimed feature of selecting one or more transmission destination domains corresponding to each of one or more transmission destination virtual private network identifiers. Applicant respectfully submits that the client object 630 described in Liu is merely used to indicate a particular client, which may, in turn, belong to a number of VPNs. And, therefore, such portions of Liu do not disclose the claimed feature of selecting one or more transmission destination domain identifiers corresponding to each of one or more transmission destination virtual private network identifiers, and the one or more transmission destination domain identifiers corresponding to a plurality of destination addresses and masks.

In other words, Liu, as cited and relied upon by the Examiner, fails to disclose,

"[a] packet relaying apparatus comprising:

first means for selecting one or more transmission destination virtual private network identifiers which are allowed to relay a received packet based on a transmission source virtual private network identifier related to the received packet;

second means for selecting one or more transmission destination domain identifiers corresponding to each of said one or more transmission destination virtual private network identifiers, the one or more transmission destination domain identifiers corresponding to a plurality of destination addresses and masks;

third means for collating, using a mask, a next relaying apparatus address of the received packet with each routing information stored in one or more domain relaying means which corresponds to each of the one or more domain identifiers to select the next packet relaying apparatus address; and

fourth means for transmitting the received packet in accordance with the next relaying apparatus address selected by the third means," as recited in claim 1. (Emphasis added)

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, together with claims 3 and 6 dependent therefrom, is patentable over Liu for at least the foregoing reasons. Claims 8 and 15

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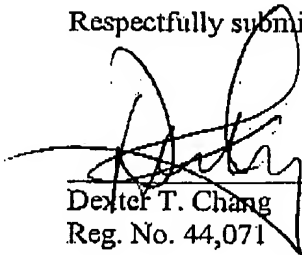
incorporate features that correspond to those of claim 1 cited above, and are, therefore, together with claims 17 and 20 dependent from claim 15, patentable over Liu for at least the same reasons. The Examiner relied upon Li to specifically address additional features recited in claims 2 and 16. As such, even assuming, arguendo, that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to combine this reference at the time the claimed invention was made, such a combination would still have failed to cure the above-described deficiencies of Liu. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2 and 16 are patentable over the cited references for at least the foregoing reasons.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's implicit finding that the additional references made of record, but not applied, do not render the claims of the present application unpatentable, whether these references are considered alone or in combination with others.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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